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**STATEMENT BY MR. PHILIPPE DOUSTE-BLAZY,  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FRANCE, AT THE  
FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Brussels, 4 December 2006

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Mr. President of the Parliamentary Assembly,  
Distinguished Ministers and Colleagues,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Karel, as Chairman-in-Office for your efforts and for the results achieved under your direction and with the support of the Secretary General.

One year ago in Ljubljana, while reaffirming our commitment to the OSCE, I had wanted to re-establish confidence within our Organization. Today, just as when it was first established, the OSCE remains our only common instrument for seeking solutions through consensus to the problems and disagreements that affect the entire European continent.

A number of regional disagreements remain. The OSCE must continue to do everything in its power to ease tensions. It does that in particular with its 19 field missions. The most recent mission was set up in Montenegro, which I should like to welcome to our Organization.

With regard to Kosovo, I should like to salute the efforts of Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will also have an important role to play in implementing the future status. Its work will have to focus on the development of democracy at the local level, respect for human rights and the prevention of inter-ethnic tensions.

With regard to Nagorno-Karabakh, the negotiations have made what I consider to be significant progress over the last few months thanks to the mediation efforts by the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group and the constructive spirit displayed by President Aliyev and President Kocharian. We encourage them to continue along this path. We have met President Kocharian. I have the impression of a breakthrough here.

In Georgia, the OSCE is playing an important role in trying to alleviate tensions. I should like to pay particular tribute to your personal involvement, Mr. Chairman. I hope that it will prove possible to reach a consensus on strengthening the personnel of the OSCE monitoring mission and on expanding its area of competence.

We ask that the principles of our Organization be respected — restraint and responsibility, refusal to use force and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Priority must be given to the resumption of dialogue and the re-establishment of confidence.

In Moldova, the Transdniestrian question must be settled through negotiation and with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. I should like to express our support for the reform efforts on the part of the Moldovan authorities, as these reforms are indispensable if the transition is to be successful.

There are other changes taking place on our continent and we must take into account the increased diversity of the OSCE today. France welcomes the candidacy of Kazakhstan to assume the chairmanship of the OSCE in the near future. We encourage Kazakhstan to do everything necessary to be able to take on this important and demanding responsibility.

It is in this same spirit that we support the efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the OSCE. The work that has been accomplished so far is solid. It gives us a basis for re-establishing confidence.

For a start, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has submitted a report of high quality in my opinion. What stands out in my mind first is that the OSCE has a substantial “acquis” which we must all respect. I take note also of the useful and specific suggestions concerning our commitments as OSCE participating States, notably with regard to respect for human rights and election monitoring.

I should also like to take this opportunity to salute the work of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to promote freedom of expression. The OSCE has a great responsibility in this area. I should also like to stress here the work, undertaken sometimes at the risk of their own lives, of human rights advocates to ensure that universal values are respected. It goes without saying that freedom of expression is one such value.

As regards strengthening the effectiveness of our Organization, we have made some progress. The OSCE’s conferences will be better prepared, the missions will be more effective and human and budgetary resources will, within the limits imposed by our constraints, be better managed.

I believe that it is also necessary to consolidate the role and the missions of the Secretary General. It is a matter of ensuring that our Organization is more co-ordinated and that there is greater continuity in its work.

Mr. Chairman,

France supports the work of the OSCE and wishes to make a contribution to concrete projects, concrete projects that respond to the aspirations of our citizens. We have proposed three projects this year:

- Combating all forms of intolerance: Following our previous initiatives in this area, France will organize a training session next week in Paris for police officers from OSCE countries on combating hate crimes, racist crimes and anti-Semitic crimes. I

hope that this initiative will help to increase vigilance and allow better co-operation in investigations.

- Combating sexual exploitation of children: International regulations already exist. We want better account to be taken of them in national legislation and better co-operation to be established among our countries. The work of the Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings will be important in this respect.
- Combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons by air: We propose increasing controls on airline companies that are involved in illicit trafficking in arms and that violate United Nations embargos. This kind of trafficking fuels conflicts around the world and contributes to the destabilization of States, particularly in Africa. I welcome the adoption of a decision on this subject.

Mr. Chairman,

I am convinced that our meeting in Brussels will help to re-establish confidence among all our countries, all “stakeholders” in the OSCE.

It is in this framework that the work of the incoming Spanish Chairmanship, which can count on France’s complete support, will proceed.